(c) No proposal is under consideration to stop the construction of the road.

(d) Construction of elevated road also involves removal of structures.

Utilization of BRGF

*306. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether 250 districts of the country have been short listed for the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) programme for receiving funds to reduce regional imbalances and eradicate poverty and backwardness and against allocation for 2007-08 of around of Rs. 4,670 crore, only Rs. 700 crore were disbursed;

(b) if so, the main reasons for not utilizing the funds;

(c) whether Government has changed the guidelines so that the funds are utilized fully and in time; and

(d) the latest position of utilizing the funds during the remaining period of the financial year?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programmes includes three components namely, (i) releases to those districts which have not received their total entitlement under Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY); (ii) funds for capacity building of Panchayati Raj institutions and (iii) untied development grant. The total amount available for disbursement under Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme during 2007-08 is Rs. 4760 crore. Of this amount, Rs. 250 crore is reserved for capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The remainder is the untied development grant, which also funds the erstwhile RSVY schemes. An amount of Rs. 1286.46 crore has been released so far during 2007-08.

(b) The main constraints in the drawal of funds under Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) have been the backlog of releases to be made under the erstwhile Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana and the necessary time taken in the preparation of district plans from the grass roots level upwards through Panchayats, and Municipalities and consolidated by the District Planning Committees, on which the BRGF proposals are to be based.

(c) It has been decided that the districts which have not yet drawn their total allocation of Rs. 45 crore under the RSVY, will also be eligible to claim development grant concurrently under BRGF provided they have prepared participative district plan duly integrated and consolidated by the District Planning Committees (DPCs) constituted in accordance with Article 243 ZD of the Constitution.

(d) A National Workshop of Zila Parishad Presidents, Chief Executive Officers of Zila Panchayats and officials from the State Governments was held in Delhi on 13-14th October, 2007 during which steps to be taken to expedite the drawal of funds under the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme (BRGF) were discussed with the participants. The State High Powered Committees in five States namely, Rajasthan, Orissa, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have approved a number of district plans in the second fortnight of November, 2007, thus expediting the pace of releases under the programme.

The value of the proposals cleared by the State High Powered Comittees and due to be processed for release exceeds Rs. 1000 crore. For many of the balance districts, proposals from the States are expected to be received in December, 2007. As of now, it is the Ministry's expectation that all, or at any ratio, the bulk of the budget provision of BRGF will be released.

Regional Passport Office in Mangalore

*307. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to open a Regional Passport Office in Mangalore in Karnataka;

(b) the total number of applications for issuance of passport received from South Canara region in the previous three years;

(c) the total number of applications for issuance of passport pertaining to South Canara region that are pending; and

(d) the time frame fixed to establish a Regional Passport Office in Mangalore?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (d) In view of the growing demand from different sections of the society, the Government are considering to open a Passport Office in Mangalore. However, as part of the 'Passport Seva Project', a Passport Facilitation Centre will be located in Mangalore. This centre is expected to be operational by the beginning of 2009.

(b) The total number of applications for Passports received from South Canara region during previous three years is as under:—

District	Applications for fresh passports			Applications for miscellaneous services		
	2005	2006	2007 (as on 27.11.07)	2005	2006	2007 (as on 27.11.07)
Dakshina Kannada	19091	26886	25536	1641	1955	2179
Udupi	7659	12238	11696	614	687	742
TOTAL:	26750	39124	37232	2255	2642	2921

(c) The total number of applications under process for issue of passports pertaining to South Canara region is 1639 (as on November 27, 2007).

Global warming

*308. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is preparing to put before U.N.'s convention, its strategies on climate change;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the further steps which are being taken to control global warming?